REPORT OF PROGRESS WERA IRN:
Learning to Teach: Building Global Research Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision Making
Submitted by
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This WERA-IRN initiated in February 2014, brings together education colleagues across
different world-settings interested in pursuing context-driven collaborative historical,
theoretical, and empirical work seeking to answer the elusive question about the conditions that
best support teacher learning throughout the life-cycle and to develop capacity to produce in-
country research to back such conclusions. We have worked using Skype, email, google docs
and face-to-face meetings and joint meetings/presentations. We have been fortunate to have
Beatrice Avalos-Bevan, Mary Kennedy, Geoff Whitty, Kate Reynolds and Marilyn Cochran-
Smith as advisors or discussants.

Scholarly Activities
Learning to teach: Building research capacity for evidence based decision-making. Aims, significance
and work plan. First report. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the Scottish
Educational Research Association and the World Education Research Association Focal
Learning to Teach: Building Global Research Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision Making,
Recruitment and Planning Meeting. American Educational Research Association, Chicago,
IL, USA. April 2015.
Learning to Teach: Building Global Research Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision Making,
Symposium presented at World Education Research Association Focal Meeting held at the
European Conference on Educational Research, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary.
September 2015.
Learning to Teach: Building Global Research Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision Making, Symposium
I and II. World Education Research Association Focal Meeting at the annual meeting of the
Learning to Teach: Building Global Research Capacity for Evidence-Based Decision Making, Symposium.

Book Proposal
We submitted a book proposal to Bloomsbury Academic – Education on April 2017. The title of
the book is Knowledge, Policy and Practice in Teacher Education: A Cross-National Study. The editors
are Maria Teresa Tatoo (Arizona State University) and Ian Menter (University of Oxford). The
authors are for Australia (White, Monash University), the Czech Republic (Novotna, Charles
University), England (Menter, Burn, & Mutton, University of Oxford), Finland (Jaakko & Santti,
University of Tampere & University of Helsinki), Hong-Kong (Zhang, Education University of
Hong Kong), Ireland (Conway, University of Limerick), Israel (Zuzovsky & Smadar, School of
Questions guiding our study/book
The book examines the following questions:

a) What knowledge claims about what teachers need to learn are supported in each nation? How central/ extensive is this work, and how much consensus is there?
b) What knowledge claims about what teachers need to learn are contested/have had mixed empirical results? Why are these knowledge claims contested, and what are the points of contestation?

After comparing the nations, we identify which knowledge claims are ignored or non-existent in specific nations. We hope that this kind of meta-summary (of what research on what teachers need to know, what is the quality or depth of the field, and what is missing) will help inform the empirical research base in teacher education.

Description and Rationale
The book is structured in three major sections. In the first section, we review the evolution of education policy on initial teacher education as an indicator of the knowledge that is considered important for nation building, and the research on knowledge for initial teacher education as an indication of the intellectual and moral direction to which schooling must aspire.

In the second section, a range of contributors look at these dynamics across powerful societies including, Australia, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, Hong-Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, and the United States. Individual chapters will answer questions of how teachers learn to teach in different countries considering the history and the theory as well as empirical evidence. Each country-chapter observed rigorous criteria for inclusion of research studies. These criteria was developed within each country context because our assumption that what counts as valid, reliable and useable knowledge will vary from country to country (this is an important meta-question that we will seek to answer through our work as well). Each chapter is expected to chart the evolution of the research that has supported current and past innovations in teacher education to answer questions such as: Historically, what has been the role of schooling in learning to teach in the country? What is the role of time in the progression of learning to teach in individuals’ lived experiences? What is the role of social and organizational norms in the transitions from learner to novice to expert and beyond? What is the role of the social structure, institutional arrangements, and of schools in learning to teach?
The third and final section reviews how the country specific chapters in Section 2 illustrate the international variability in different conceptions of knowledge in the context of learning to teach (e.g., curriculum, what knowledge counts as important among teacher educators and for teacher education). We also seek to explore the way in which national and international influences interact in the developing trajectories of teacher education policy and practice. These final chapters (including the conclusion) synthesize and compare each country findings beginning with conceptions of learning to teach, and what knowledge is considered important for teachers to have.

**Length and Delivery**
The estimated length of the book is 120000 words. We expect submission of the full manuscript to Bloomsbury by the end of January 2018.

**Scholarly Significance**
Our inquiry is located at the core of different conceptions of knowledge across the contexts of teacher learning and its interaction with what individuals bring with them as they are initiated into teaching. To date we lack a cross-national examination of these important questions. This cross-national perspective is expected to reveal major trends that typically remain obscured in single country studies. These chapters demonstrate the complexity embedded in the knowledge that is considered worth having for teachers and the complex history and theory involved in the provision of teacher education.

**Future Plans for Our IRN**
As we began work on the book we realized that identifying how teachers learn to teach effectively (e.g., what knowledge is needed for effective teachers and how teacher education enacts this knowledge in opportunities to learn provided to future teachers) while important it is a difficult question to answer cross-nationally given that the notion of “effectiveness” is contested. We realized that we needed a two-step process. We first needed to answer the question: What is the professional knowledge that teachers should possess, and how teachers are expected to learn that knowledge with careful attention to context, bringing together historical, theoretical, and empirical work. In other words, what knowledge claims have been researched? How strong is the evidence, and of what quality? If there is no research, where do these ideas come from? This is what our first book does.

Subsequent topics for a future synthesis and book emerging out of our current work might be:

- Are there differences in how research on teacher education influence policy and practice across the countries we have as case studies?
- Does research knowledge inform effective teaching and if so how?
- Can we identify countries where academics influence the policy debates? Can we look at how the relationships with global actors affect the research that gets used (e.g., how influential are OECD and IEA reports in effecting teacher and teacher education reforms)?